

## **Eating as an Act of Love**

### **Part 1: Decreasing food waste**

Most of us try to eat healthy foods—not too many sweets or highly processed foods, and plenty of fruits and vegetables—but few of us think of eating as a spiritual practice.

Poor agricultural and grazing methods have contributed to habitat loss and species extinction, and negatively impacted water resources. Currently, agriculture is causing about a quarter of our greenhouse gas emissions, and increased global temperatures are already causing food insecurity around the world. The good news is that improved technologies and modern farming and grazing strategies not only reduce agriculture's environmental damage and mitigate climate change, but also help regenerate degraded land. Is there anything we as individuals can do to help in this effort? Yes, there is!

Individuals and families can make a difference in efforts to decrease food shortages, reduce environmental damage, and lessen global warming, simply by changing how we eat. As much as half of all the food produced in the world is never eaten. Some is lost in transport to consumers, but much of the food we grow is wasted. Wasted food means lost resources and unnecessary emissions of greenhouse gasses. Climate and environmental scientist Jonathan Foley list some ways to avoid food waste.<sup>1</sup>

### **Decreasing Food Waste**

- **Serve smaller portions of food at meals. Save and eat leftovers.**
- **Avoid wasting meat and dairy in particular** (raising cattle is resource-expensive and a major contributor to greenhouse gas emission).
- **Don't throw away food based on the sell-by date** (they are manufacturer suggestions for peak freshness and have little to do with safety).
- **Shop wisely by planning meals** (the average American households spend about \$2,000 a year for food they throw away).
- **Encourage restaurants and caterers to donate leftovers, when possible, to food banks.**
- **Compost food waste** (by establishing a backyard compost pile, or by lobbying for curbside collection of food scraps for community wide composting). Composting can build soil and reduce methane emissions.
- **Choose locally grown foods when available.**

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Foley. Apr 21, 2020. "Your Personal Action Guide for the Environment" (<https://globalecoguy.org/a-personal-action-guide-for-the-environment-20d70fcdd840>; accessed September 14, 2022)